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ABSTRACT

The Kansas Goals 2000 Early Career Professional Development Program is a joint effort between universities, the Southeast Education Service Center, and 68 school districts. The program helps provide a seamless system of professional development for beginning teachers in their first 3 years of experience. The program relies heavily on trained mentors who offer continuous daily support. Nine mentor training sessions are held throughout the year to prepare the mentors. The sessions focus on such areas as facing fears, student motivation, discipline, conferencing skills, teaching and learning styles, instructional strategies, planning integrated curriculum, using technology, evaluating students, and evaluating the program. In addition to the training sessions, there is the Early Career Teacher Training Manual. It offers an orientation checklist, activity time line, and information on getting started, classroom management, conferencing, effective instructional strategies, and technology. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected on the program, including a teacher needs assessment and discussion with teachers. Results show that the program is very effective. Participants are excited about the collaborative effort and expect it to serve as a model for future induction efforts by the state of Kansas. (Contains 2 tables and 16 references.) (SM)

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A Seamless System of Professional Development from Preservice to Tenured Teaching

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A Seamless System of Professional Development from Preservice to Tenured Teaching

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The Kansas Goals 2000 Early Career Professional Development Program is a joint effort between Pittsburg State, Emporia State, the Southeast Education Service Center, and 68 school districts. Funded by grant money and participation fees, the program attempts to provide a seamless system of professional development for beginning teachers in their first three years of experience.

Overview

History: In an effort to develop a systemized infrastructure for continuous teacher training from undergraduate preparation to the third year of teaching, a multifaceted program was conceptualized and developed under a Kansas Goals 2000 grant. Dr. Victoria White (Pittsburg State), Linda Hazel (Emporia State), and Dr. Kent Runyan (Pittsburg State) worked over the 1995 summer to design the program and develop materials. In fashioning a needs-based developmental training program, a number of decisions were made to fit the characteristics of the southeast Kansas school systems and the teacher training institutions. The size, geographical restrictions, and financial resources influenced the scope and construction of the conceptual framework. The program was piloted in the 1995-96 school year, evaluated, redesigned for the 1996-97 school year, and fully implemented in the 1997-98 school year. Dick Hedges presently serves as the Program Liaison and Jo Farabi, the project coordinator.

Orientation of Program: The present Early Career Teacher Development Program has several characteristics in that it strives to:

1. have a developmental philosophy which recognizes the beginning teacher as one who has a set of skills and needs, and as a result of the program:
    a. develops, extends, modifies, or refines these skills;
    b. orients the beginning teacher to the school system; and
    c. addresses and meets the perceived personal and professional needs of the teacher;
2. have a well defined set of rationales and goals;
3. provide continuous year-long support from the preschool orientation to third-year tenure through various organized support systems;
4. use various personnel to offer a vast array of materials, instruments, and activities to personalize each beginning teacher's year;

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5. have mentors selected, trained, and focused using current knowledge available about the beginning teacher;
6. provide frequent support interaction and targeted topics to help the beginning teacher in adjusting, expressing needs, and developing;
7. offers a large number of instructional and non-instructional areas on which the beginning teacher could focus when the need surfaces;
8. not interfere with the school evaluation system but allow for the program to provide an improvement system for any weaknesses found in the formal evaluation; and
9. be able to show positive growth from the beginning teacher's own perception of skills and knowledge as well as other qualitative and quantitative data.

Around these attributes the program was developed and is being implemented. To provide an overview of the program and organize the description, the topics of Mentors, Early Career Teachers, and Program Planning and Evaluation will be examined.

Mentors

The Early Career Professional Development Program relies heavily on trained mentors. Because of the importance of continuous daily support through mentor activity, an effort is made to train the participating mentors in specific interaction skills and research-based activities which could be used effectively with the beginning teacher.

Mentor Training Goals: To help focus the program, nine goals were established for mentor proficiency. For the training to be successful, it was felt that the mentor should be able to:

1. Conceptualize the general characteristics, needs, concerns, and expectations of the beginning teacher;
2. Understand the components of developmental beginning teacher induction programs;
3. Interact and communicate with the beginning teacher in a non-threatening, supportive manner;
4. Assess and interpret specific classroom needs and problems of the beginning teacher using checklists, assessment instruments, and personal conferences;
5. Analyze, focus, and support specific teacher classroom needs using peer coaching techniques and conferencing;
6. Use data collection instruments in observing class activities to focus classroom observations;
7. Incorporate the personal, professional, and personality needs of the beginning teacher into activities and interaction;
8. Implement developmental activities that will offer the beginning teacher additional knowledge, skills, and attitudes for successful teaching performance;
9. Serve effectively as a developmental mentor who can provide an orderly, personalized transition from preservice preparation to the first three years of teaching.

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Mentor Training Materials: To meet these goals, material was developed and structured to fit the goals, Kansas schools, and grant situations. Placed together in a mentor training manual, the material was modified after undergoing the first and second year evaluation. Included in the manual are such items as:

The Mentorship - a 44 page manuscript containing four chapters - Why Become A Mentor, Characteristics of the Beginning Teacher, Mentor Characteristics, and Mentor Communication Activity - which serves as the text of the training program.

The Mentorship Course Syllabus - a graduate course syllabus offering 3 hours of graduate credit from either Pittsburg State or Emporia State for those participating in the training sessions.

Orientation Checklist - a 225 item checklist which asks the mentor to help the beginning teacher identify school and student policies, everyday procedures, classroom expectations / reinforcement plans, and particular school cultural norms and climate characteristics.

Activity Time Line - a monthly listing of suggested mentor activities to be used with the beginning teacher which is modified to fit the particular school placement.

Data Collection Instruments - a collection of eight different instruments mentors can use when observing the beginning teacher's classroom.

Conferencing and Coaching - an outline of procedures for mentors to follow in conferencing and coaching the beginning teacher.

Teaching and Learning Style Identification - a series of teaching/learning styles instruments and explanations to help the mentor recognize and understand the cognitive, affective, and physiological traits of himself and the beginning teacher.

Personal and Professional Need Identification - a 49 question needs identification instrument (Teacher Needs Assessment Questionnaire) which can be used to identify specific personal and professional needs at various times throughout the year.

Using Video-taping In the Classroom - a series of procedural suggestions and a ten domain critique guide for using video-taping of classroom teaching episodes.

Professional Portfolio- a collection of suggestions for establishing a professional portfolio that could be used later for national certification.

Course Activities - over a dozen different activities and assessments used in the mentor training sessions.

The materials were constructed and used to allow for continuity, attention to task, and the professional development of the experienced teacher.

Mentor Training Sessions: To train the mentors, nine distinct training sessions are held. In the first year, offering a central location for the participating school

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districts, the public library in Burlington, Kansas, served as the central meeting place and proved to be an excellent facility. In the second year, two training locations were available - The Educational Service Center at Greenbush offering a southern location and the National Teacher's Hall Of Fame in Emporia offering a northern location. For the 1997-98 school year, the same two facilities are being used. For most all training sessions both the mentor and early career teacher come together, with the beginning teachers meeting together in their own seminar.

Full Day Opening Session (9:00 to 4:00)
On this opening day, the mentor and beginning teacher come together. After introductions, the morning session fosters get acquainted activities which asks both participants to examine the primary aims of education, fundamental beliefs about teaching, and the characteristics of an effective teacher. The afternoon separates the groups where the mentors will explore the characteristics and common difficulties of the beginning teacher.

Second Day Opening Session (9:00 to 4:00)
On the second day, mentoring becomes the central focus. After presenting an overview of beginning teacher induction and the Kansas Goals 2000 program, a number of areas are explored. Here, topics such as expected competencies, roles, styles of helping, and growth oriented characteristics of mentors are examined. Mentor activities such as the "Orientation Checklist" and the "Activity Time Line" then are explained. The day concludes developing skills in Rogerian counseling where the mentor reflects content and feeling when a beginning teacher comes to them with a problem.

October - Understanding and Assessing Teaching and Learning Styles
After a month back in the schools, the mentors will meet again. After each share situational concerns, the reading material and assigned activities will be reviewed. Teaching and learning styles will then become the central focus of the session. For the remainder of the year, the monthly sessions continued to develop a common routine for sharing mentoring observations as well as learning new activities, and acquiring specific skills related to mentoring. Each session would have a specific focus.

November - Classroom Observation and Data Collection

January - Conferencing, Coaching, and Rogerian Counseling

February - Using Video-Taping to Develop Classroom Skills

March - Portfolios for Professional Development and/or National Certification

April - Program Evaluation and Celebration
In this wrap-up session, a banquet is held with the respective Deans of the School of Education at Pittsburg State and Emporia State as the featured speaker. Highlights of the year are noted, and each participant (both mentor and beginning teacher) are given certificates of participation.

The training sessions are focused and designed to provide the knowledge base and skills needed to mentor another professional colleague. Refreshments and lunch are provided during each session.

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Early Career Teachers

To also provide a multifaceted, growth-oriented teacher development program, goals were established and a number of activities and materials were developed to be used with the early career teacher throughout the year.

Early Career Teacher Goals: Based on research and observed teacher needs, the following were identified as goals for the early career teachers:

1. Improved knowledge of classroom management skills;
2. Increased awareness of techniques for improved student motivation;
3. Awareness of personal issues involved in teaching;
4. Improved knowledge of parent conferencing skills;
5. Increased knowledge of effective instructional strategies;
6. Demonstrated ability to reflect on teaching practices; and
7. Awareness of building a professional portfolio and applying for national board certification.

Early Career Training Sessions: To meet these goals, nine training sessions were held throughout the year. For the convenience of the participants, two trainings were held every six weeks; one in the northern section of the region and one in the southern section. The sessions were each three hours and were structured to provide information on a monthly topic(s), plus give the early career teachers time to discuss their individual needs. Early seminars focused on issues most likely to surface at the very beginning of school such as managing time and the classroom, adjusting to a new role, balancing home and school demands, and becoming familiar with the school and community. Later seminars addressed issues such as conferencing, professional development, technology, and instructional techniques and resources. Outside resources were utilized when appropriate and personal contacts were provided when requested by individual teachers. A description of the training sessions are:

Full Day Opening Session - Teacher-Mentor Activities / Facing Your Fears
Full Day Second Session - Beginning the School Year / Student Motivation and Discipline
September - Conferencing Skills / Your Professional Family
October - Assessing and Understanding Teaching and Learning Styles / Evaluating Your Professional Development
November - Effective Instructional Strategies / Classroom Observation
January - Planning An Integrated Curriculum
February - Using Technology to Improve Instruction
March - Student Assessment / Developing and Using Portfolios
April - Program Evaluation and Celebration

The early career teachers were active participants in both seminar presentations and discussions. Each seminar was structured to allow teachers time to

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discuss situational concerns and as well as address common personal concerns such as:

adjusting to the realities of teaching;
managing time;
relieving self-doubts;
finding value in teaching;
balancing home and school demands;
becoming familiar with the community;
avoiding isolation;
building new relationships;
adjusting to a new role;

The program took the orientation that if the beginning teacher does not personally adjust to the new occupation, the chance of long-term professional development is diminished.

The seminars, as well as mentors, also addressed specific situational professional needs of the early career teachers. The professional needs were identified, tracked, and measured by the *Teacher Needs Assessment Questionnaire* (a 49 item instrument which identifies professional needs based on importance, extent of mastery, and desire to improve) . These professional areas are:

Professional Needs

1. Professional Responsibility
2. School Responsibility
3. Objective Usage
4. Lesson Plan Construction
5. Instructional Variation
6. Enthusiasm
7. Motivation
8. Verbal Clarity
9. Material Organization
10. Motivational Set
11. Daily Review
12. Direct Instruction
13. Cooperative Learning
14. Adequate Illustration
15. Question Level Variation
16. Question Wait Time
17. Question Techniques
18. Question Correctives
19. Question Distribution
20. Transitions
21. Checks for Understanding
22. Guided Practice
23. Independent Practice
24. Closure
25. Teaching Aids
26. Clear Directions
27. High Time on Task
28. Sponge Activities
29. Room Layout
30. Rules
31. Discipline Hierarchy
32. Positive Reward System
33. Monitoring
34. Physical Safety
35. Established Evaluation System
36. Assignment Feedback
37. Monitoring and Correctives
38. Student/Parent Communication
39. Empathy, Warmth, and Respect
40. Consistent Disposition
41. High Expectation
42. Knowledge of Students
43. Effective Role Model
44. Specialized Services
45. Staff Collegiality
46. Administration Relations
47. Parental Relations
48. Conference Skills
49. Effective Schools Implementation

These professional domains were research-based and aligned with the stages of typical beginning teacher development. Specific time lines and checklists were

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employed to organize specific areas of concentration and were modified to fit the expressed needs of the participating early career teachers.

Early Career Material: In addition to the training sessions, material was gathered and structured to fit Southeast Kansas schools. An Early Career Teacher Training Manual was developed to be used in the program. Many of the initially included items were identified from a 1995 needs assessment conducted with recent graduates awaiting their first teaching assignment and those completing their first year in southeast Kansas schools. Additional material was added as the program progressed and further program evaluation suggested development. Included in the manual are such items as:

Orientation Checklist - a 225 item checklist which asks the beginning teacher to identify school and student policies, everyday procedures, classroom expectations / reinforcement plans, and particular school cultural norms and climate characteristics.

Activity Time Line - a monthly listing of suggested activities with the mentor which is modified to fit the particular school placement.

Getting Started - materials specifically addressing the first few days and weeks of school as well as forms and handouts which might be helpful throughout the year to assist with record keeping, organization, classroom management, and time consolidation.

Classroom Management - materials addressing student relationships, behavioral guidelines, consistency, reinforcement, motivational strategies, and common challenging situations such as verbal confrontations, foul language, and off-task behaviors.

Conferencing - materials covering effective communication, parent contact strategies, open house preparation, and specific conferencing arrangements, preparation and procedures.

Effective Instructional Strategies - materials which presented various instructional strategies appropriate for all students as well as those appropriate for students with different learning styles, intelligences or special needs.

Technology - a collection of material designed to help incorporate technology into the classroom and use the Internet as an instructional resource.

In addition, the program is using "electronic mentoring" to link teachers with experts and collaborative opportunities. Web sites, including "chat pages," have been located and shared with both the beginning teachers and their mentors. Within the year, the Early Career Developmental Program plans to have their own Internet location. An Internet home page is being developed to allow beginning teachers in southeast Kansas a place to connect with one another and consult experienced professionals on topics of concern.

Several other new ideas will also be tried this year. The program will pilot a

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quarterly newsletter in the Spring which will highlight innovative instructional techniques, management practices, early career teacher activities, and program updates. A "Third Ear" will also be tested near the end of the year. This transmitter/ receiver system employs a small ear plug placed in the early career teacher's ear which allows the mentor to orally communicate from the back of the room while the early career teacher is teaching. This technique has been shown to effectively work in developing specific skills such as classroom monitoring, questioning, increasing positive feedback, and exploring innovative teaching procedures.

As with the mentor component, three hours of graduate credit either through Pittsburg State University or Emporia State University is available to those who wish to participate.

Program Planning

The Early Career Professional Development Program was a new concept to southeast Kansas and getting school districts to participate was one of the major tasks. Several schools had pieces of a comprehensive induction program in place, but few were undertaking a complete program.

After developing the materials and seminar formats from the results of an initial needs assessment questionnaire in the summer of 1995, several actions were taken to cultivate the involvement of the 68 local school districts in southeast Kansas. To promote the program, several approaches were used:

Brochures were developed and mailed along with a cover letter to all the districts in southeast Kansas.

Local Presentations were made at area superintendent's meetings with additional presentations on program components made to assistant superintendents and curriculum directors.

Several **State Presentations** were made. The program was presented at the 1996 United School Administrators State Conference in Wichita and at the Kansas Association of School Boards conference in 1997.

Several **National Presentations** were made. The program and research data have been presented at the International Mentoring Association's 10th Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, April 3-5, 1997, and the Mid-American Educational Research Association's annual conference in Chicago, IL., October 15-18, 1997.

Letters were sent in early May to area superintendents reminding them of the program.

An **Article** outlining the growth and development of the program was authored and sent to most every teacher in southeast Kansas through the Educational Resource Center.

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Phone calls were made in June to each district to check for questions and enrollment numbers.

A short **promotional video** with testimonials was made to be used to advertise the program.

Funding for the program came from a Kansas Goals 2000 group through the Kansas State Department of Education in Topeka, Kansas. Additional funds were received through Kansas University in the form of an Eisenhower grant as well as from a fee charged to participating school districts for individual enrollment.

Program Evaluation

Both qualitative and quantitative data has been collected on the last two year's program and is being collected on this year's activities.

Quantitative Data. The *Teacher Needs Assessment Questionnaire* (TNAQ) is being used to show quantitative professional progression for early career teachers . These teachers, both individually and as a group, are being tracked as they hopefully move through the stages of survival, mastery, and impact. Using as a basis the Fuller and Brown stages - survival, mastery, and impact - the program assigned each of the 49 *Teacher Needs Assessment Questionnaire* items to one of the three stages - Establishing Structures (Survival), Developing the Science of Teaching (Mastery), and Cultivating the Art of Teaching (Impact) - to establish a theoretical framework. Developing out of seven years of study and six statistical studies with over 700 teachers of various years of experience, a three stage theoretical base was crystallized.

Based on each individual teacher's perception, the program collects data on the beginning teacher's development three times a year, tracking their movement through the stages. Using the theoretical stage framework, the program strives to move each teacher from a survival mentality to making an impact on every child. Characteristics of each stage are listed below.

Characteristics of Each Developmental Stage

Establishing Structures
(Survival)

Acquiring supplies and establishing room layout
Knowing school policies, norms and culture
Building collegial staff relationships
Establishing classroom procedures and routines
Setting rules and reinforcing them to gain respect of students

Expanding subject matter knowledge
Lesson planning for high time on task
Coping with evaluation, other's opinion, and fear of failure
Knowing parents and opening lines of communication

Developing the Science of Teaching
(Mastery)

Using various models of teaching correctly
Acquisition of innovative techniques, activities, and ideas
Asking classroom questions effectively and providing review and practice
Providing timely assignment feedback and furnishing justification for grades
Clear direction giving, illustration, and transitions so classroom activities move smoothly
Identifying learning styles, characteristics, and needs of class
Providing sponge activities to keep students busy
Managing time pressures

Developing the Art of Teaching
(Impact)

Being novel, vivid, and varied in teaching strategies
Achieving equity in monitoring, questioning and feedback
Showing high expectations for every student and motivating all students to succeed
Striving to meet the individual academic, emotional and social needs of students
Developing consistency in enthusiasm, fairness and humorous disposition
Being a role model who shows empathy, warmth, and respect to each student

Each time the instrument is used, a computer program is used to tabulate the means and display individual and group results. Using 31 early career teachers and 23 mentors from the 1996-97 Early Career Teacher Development program, the results of the instrument have proved promising as a vehicle capable of identifying developmental stages and illustrating group/individual movement from one stage to another (See Table 1).

Table 1
1996-97 Comparison of Developmental Stage Means Between Early Career Teachers/Mentors

	Early Career Teachers						Mentors	
	September		January		April		September	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Survival	5.14	1	4.53	2	4.30	2	3.14	3
Mastery	5.09	2	4.57	1	4.39	1	3.41	2
Impact	4.98	3	4.26	3	3.90	3	3.54	1

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From these findings, several conclusions were reached and are prompting the program organizers to further study its use:

1. Consistent with past studies conducted with the TNAQ, a consistent decline in need was shown as experience is gained by the beginning teacher.

2. A movement from Survival to Mastery stages was identified after four months of experience for the early career teacher and continued through the end of the year.

3. The mentors showed less need in all areas and were identified in the Impact stage.

The results of the 1997-98 group of beginning teachers indicate high similarity with these results. Again, the present year's group of beginning teachers are beginning their year with high concerns towards establishing effective structures within their teaching environment (survival) and progessing as they move into the year to mastery over the science of teaching (See Table 2). Again, significant reduction of concern is shown as they progress.

Table 2
1997-98 Comparison of Developmental Stage Means Between Early Career Teachers/Mentors

	Early Career Teachers						Mentors	
	September		January		April		September	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Survival	5.52	1	3.82	2	NA		3.08	3
Mastery	5.26	2	3.89	1	NA		3.26	1
Impact	5.04	3	3.56	3	NA		3.24	2

With a perspective that it was possible to identify stage development using the TNAQ's 49 items, the program hopes to use quantitative data to support its effectiveness as well as focus the program's assistance. In essence, as beginning teachers move through their first several years of teaching, they seem to generate concerns in a developmental sequence, even though there are identifiable situational differences. If left unexplored, these concerns could ultimately become major dissatisfactions which could influence their personal and professional life and stagnate their development.

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Qualitative. Qualitative data has also been collected and illustrates across-the-board positive responses from both mentors and early career teachers.

> This is a great program! I've always felt that mentoring was the very best way to help a new person get started. I really appreciate the opportunity to be involved in getting the program started. I've learned as much about myself as I have about my new team member. This training will definitely make me a better teacher and employee.
>
> Excellent - it provided knowledge and support to beginning teachers and mentors - it was good for self-evaluation and sparks renewed interest in academic excellence.
>
> Very good program. I feel all beginning teachers need to do this, and it is a good review for the mentors. Teaching can be overwhelming and an isolated job and by working with someone you feel you can trust and talk to would help you feel more comfortable.
>
> Thank You!! The "tools" and activities we worked on helped us communicate. It allowed us... to support and transfer the information.

Summary: The program participants are excited about this collaborative effort and expect it to serve as a model for future induction efforts by the state of Kansas. In fact, for the 1997-98 school year, the program, in part, will be expanded into the state of Missouri. Using quantitative data and comments derived from the evaluation instruments, modification will continue to be made to more strongly focus mentor and program activity on specific personal and professional needs of the beginning teacher. The future looks bright for the beginning teachers of Kansas.

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